May 21st 1852

Medical.

The heart irregularity I take to be nervous
& functional, not from organic lesion,
tho', at my age, some changes of structure are
not unusual. I have uneasiness, but hardly
pain: not continued but shifting, but irregular
throbs, felt also in the hand, & of course very much
at the wrist at the time. This, with headache,
is sure to come on when I have been writing
much, & asing no exercise. I believe it much
depends upon the state of the stomach & bowels.
An active aperient surely relieves me. Moderate
employment, & extreme simplicity of diet, as
well as abstinence in it, will generally keep
me pretty well. When courageous, & determined
at this point, I take for breakfast, (as I have
done 6 days) 2 cups of tea with a roll of bloomer
bread, weighing about 5 Oz soaked in it. Some
times at 1 I take a plain bun or a bit of bloomer
bread, & dine at 4½ on bread, one kind of meat
(or fish) & potatoes, adjuring pastry, cheese, &
dessert. At 8 I take tea with some toasted
bread soaked in it. When using much
exercise I may take a small basin of bloomer
gruel at breakfast, & when not on a strict
regime, butter with my morning roll, & some
rice or pudding at dinner. My drink is

water; and sometimes, especially if in much exercise, I take one or 1½ glass of Sherry wine at dinner.

I will give you a prescription for a mild aperient pill which I have taken, I may say daily for 20 years of my life: one, I take sometimes ½ a pill, or one alternate days, always immediately after dinner. Every morning upon rising when I have a cold, or am rheumatic, I plunge my body with cold water from head to foot, applying the water more liberally to the feet & other parts of the body. Persons apt to suppose that as they advance in life they need more nutriment, — the reverse is the case — The nervous tone of the brain tells more upon the general health than exercise of any other parts — A daily relief of the bowels is essential to the continued good health of most.

My impression is that, the American are not sufficiently cautious in their diet & consume it too quickly —

Yrs